

to America. Afterward he always spoke with regret of losing his first son and told people he had four children, including the son who had gone to America.

Soterios and Meropi had two sons—the first again named George in Greek tradition and the second named Dimitri—and a daughter, Viriana. As they grew, they would see men in town who resembled them and wonder if the mystery brother might not be in America after all. As adults, they made an unsuccessful attempt to locate George in America.

"They knew I was in the United States, but the United States is a very big place," Consin Jr. said. "They didn't know where to look."

George and Mary Consin Sr. were born in Greece but met in America. George Sr. came to America with his family in 1933. Mary came to America in 1946, after World War II. After marrying, the couple tried for a decade—without success—to bear a child.

A relative who was a congressman in Athens, Greece, arranged for the Consins to adopt 20-month-old George. Although American adoption agencies considered George Sr. and Mary old to be adoptive parents, Greek adoption agencies preferred older couples, whom they considered more stable.

The Consins were thrilled, but a trip to Greece would be expensive. They asked for help from longtime family friends Jim and Jenny Peroulas, who were planning a family vacation to Greece with their children, Maria and Johnny.

"They were very close friends," said Jim Peroulas, former owner of a Market Square restaurant and now a bailiff for Sessions Judge Brenda Waggoner. "They were depending on us to bring the baby up here."

The Peroulases picked up the boy and kept him with them in Greece for a few weeks before boarding a 12 hour flight to the United States. The Peroulases then stayed with the Consins for a few days, until George Jr. was used to his new home.

"He was a very nice boy," Jim Peroulas said. "They took care of the boy and brought him up right. They told him that and was involved in (the adoption), and George asked me several times to tell him those tales."

George Jr. grew up in Knoxville, fully aware that he was adopted. "It was never an issue or a secret," he said. Being an only child, he was "spoiled rotten," he said.

His parents, like many other Greeks, emphasized the importance of family, hospitality and church. George Jr. grew up close to aunts, uncles and cousins as well as the extended "family" of St. George Greek Orthodox Church, where he was an altar boy and attended church school. In public school, he learned English.

As a child, George Jr. was regaled with his father's stories of a childhood in Greece and his mother's stories of Greece during the war. Though he was interested in the Greek culture, growing up in America suited George Jr. fine.

"I'm sure that I was afforded opportunities I wouldn't have had there," he said.

When he was 20, George Jr. met 17-year-old Angela Barkas on a vacation in Myrtle Beach, where her father owned a restaurant. Twelve years ago—after his graduation from the University of Tennessee and her graduation from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro—they were married. Now George Jr. is vice president of retail sales at First American National Bank and Angela's an interior designer. They have two sons—Alex, 8, and Nicholas, 6.

George Jr.'s parents told Angela of his background, and from time to time the couple would discuss the possibility of finding his birth father.

"Because he was adopted in Greece, it wasn't like we ever thought a reunion would

be possible." Angela said "It's so far away, and there's the language barrier. \* \* \* We never thought it would happen."

In April 1997, a Greek delegation from Larissa, Greece—about 45 minutes from George Jr.'s birthplace in Volos—visited Knoxville. After reading about the delegation's journey in the News-Sentinel, George Sr. approached someone in the group about trying to locate George Jr.'s birth father, whose last name and first initial he had on a document. George Sr. wasn't sure the other man still lived in Volos, or whether he was even still living, but an attorney in Greece helped him locate the Kalliakoudas family.

In October 1997, George Sr. made a phone call to Volos and spoke with Meropi, who told him Soterios had his vocal cords removed as a result of throat cancer and could not speak on the phone. Meropi and Soterios immediately sent letters to George Sr., while George, Dimitri and Viriana each sent family photograph with information written on the back.

They were overjoyed to have finally found the "other brother."

George Jr. was at work one day when he got a phone call from George Sr., now, 78 and working in the 78 and working in the Knox County property assessors office. "I've got something for you" he told him. "Can you come down to my office?"

The elder Consin presented his son the envelope of letters and photographs. "He wanted to give me this opportunity while he was still alive," George Jr. said. "He was waiting for the right time."

He took the envelope home to Angela. Together they pored over the first letter which took George Jr. two hours to read because his knowledge of the Greek language was rusty. That weekend, apprehensive of the language barrier, they placed a long-distance call to Viriana.

"We didn't want to shock his father, and we knew he couldn't speak," Angela said.

The phone call cost \$80—and countless tears of joy.

"We started getting calls from Greece almost immediately—aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings," said George Jr., who said Soterios at first was afraid his son would be angry at him for giving him up. George Jr. quickly made it clear that wasn't the case and now talks to his Greek relatives at least twice a month.

The Consins had been saving money for living room furniture and a family trip to Disney World. "George came in and said, 'Forget the furniture! Forget Disney! We're going to Greece!'" Angela said.

In May 1998, the couple went, taking along their sons to meet a "new" grandfather. About 30 relatives met them at the airport. "We were all crying," Angela said. "It was very exciting."

The Consins stayed in Greece for three weeks. "It was very comfortable," George said. "It was like we had known them all our lives."

Because both George Jr. and Angela had grown up only children, their sons met their only first cousins. Four of Soterios' five brothers as well as all their children and their families lived within three blocks of Soterios and Meropi. "My children didn't speak Greek, and the cousins didn't speak English, but they played together all the time," Angela said.

Nor did his inability to speak English keep Soterios from bonding with his new grandsons. "He spent a lot of time with (Alex and Nicholas), taking them for walks and out for ice cream," George Jr. said. "If they were doing something wrong, he'd whistle to let them know."

George Jr. got to meet his own paternal grandparents, now in their 90s, as well as his

godfather—who was present at his christening—and countless other relatives. "We probably met 100 people while we were there," Angela said.

Moreover, Meropi tracked down the family of George's biological mother—of whom she was a friend—and invited them over for a meal, an unselfish gesture that stunned the Consins.

"Here she was, the second wife, having to deal with the first wife's child," Angela said, "and she invited the first wife's sister over for lunch, having her there in the house crying over the dead wife's picture. She was so gracious."

This meeting with the mother's sister led to a trip to her house in Trikala, an hour-and-a-half drive from Volos. Three of George Jr.'s mother's four sisters and their families—about 30 people in all—attended a luncheon to welcome the newfound relatives. Again, the Consins were overwhelmed by hospitality.

"They slaughtered a pig for us," Angela said. "They even made their own feta cheese—they even made their own wine! Even the salad we ate was from their own garden."

The Consins were "treated like kings and queens" throughout their stay, they said. They would admire an object in town, only to find it on their bed the next day. They had to buy two extra suitcases in Greece to bring home all their gifts.

The Consins also brought American gifts for their new Greek family—perfume for the women, jewelry for the girls, Beanie Babies and Legos for the children. But it was a gift sent the previous Christmas that was most precious to Soterios and Meropi.

Angela had made the Kalliakoudases a photo album of George growing up, using two photographs from each year of his life, and had a friend fluent in Greek write captions underneath. She ended the photo album with photos of Alex and Nicholas and left blank pages for future pictures of the family's times together.

"When we went to visit, that album was on their coffee table with the photo albums of the other children," Angela said. "Meropi said (Soterios) showed it to everyone who came over."

They hope to fill the album to overflowing. George Jr. will leave for another trip to Greece later this month—Angela and the children will join him for another trip next year—and the Consins hope their Greek relatives will be able to visit them in America.

George Jr. said his adoptive parents and newfound biological parents get along well. Meropi calls George and Mary Consin, he said, and the Kalliakoudases always ask about the Consins and refer to them to George Jr. as "your parents."

And they all realize their debt to George Consin Sr., who gave his son a second father—and Soterios back his son.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE PLANT PROTECTION ACT OF 1999

**HON. CHARLES T. CANADY**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 21, 1999*

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Plant Protection Act of 1999. Our nation's farmlands, wilderness, and public lands are facing a serious threat from invasive plants and plant pests that can destroy valuable crops and other natural resources. The United States loses thousands of

acres and billions of dollars in lost produce and prevention costs each year due to invasive species. In addition, the ecosystems of our parks and wilderness areas are confronting devastating harm from these non-indigenous plants and pests. The rapid growth of international trade has resulted in a vastly increased volume of goods flowing into the country—goods that may carry prohibited foreign plants or noxious weeds.

These harmful invasive plants and species are causing considerable economic damage to natural resources nationwide. In my home state of Florida, Citrus Canker poses the largest threat to citrus crop production in recent history, necessitating over \$160 million in state and federal government funding to curb the disease. In the South, cotton producers and the federal government have spent nearly \$500 million to prevent damage to crops due to Bollweevil pests. Chicago and New York have suffered significant losses to the Asian longhorned beetle, which has destroyed thousands of trees in city neighborhoods. Noxious weeds have attacked crops in the Carolinas and in the rangelands of Oregon, Idaho and Washington. In California and Florida, invasive species have halted high-value agricultural exports from disease infested areas. The effect of invasive plants and species throughout the country is profound.

Exacerbating this problem are the outdated, fragmented, and confusing quarantine statutes that govern interdiction of prohibited plant and plant pests. Many of these laws date back to the early part of this century and have not been updated in decades. Our agricultural sector and public lands need a modern, effective statutory authority that will protect our crops from the introduction of harmful pests.

The Plant Protection Act of 1999 will build a solid foundation for the future by streamlining and modernizing plant interdiction laws. This legislation consolidates eleven existing statutes into one comprehensive law and eliminates outdated and ambiguous provisions. It also establishes effective deterrents against trafficking of prohibited species by increasing the monetary penalties for smuggling; providing the U.S. Department of Agriculture with a comprehensive set of investigatory tools; ensuring transparency for U.S. trading partners; and recognizing the benefits of new technologies such as biological control organisms.

The Plant Protection Act, originally introduced in the 105th Congress, will enhance the ability of our nation to protect its lands and crops by giving the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service the investigatory and enforcement tools it needs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as 45 agricultural organizations from throughout the country support the Plant Protection Act. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this vital and important legislation.

TRIBUTE TO HIS HIGHNESS  
SHEIKH ISSA BIN SALMAN AL-  
KHALIFA, LATE EMIR OF THE  
STATE OF BAHRAIN

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 21, 1999*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, March 6th, His Highness Sheikh Issa Bin

Salman Al-Khalifa, the Emir of Bahrain, died suddenly. The world mourned with the people of Bahrain, and, last week, on April 14th, the State of Bahrain commemorated the 40th, and last, day of mourning.

Sheikh Issa played an important role as the leader of Bahrain. He supported U.S. and international efforts to promote peace and stability during the most difficult and contentious times in the Gulf and the Middle East. He was a man who relied on his intuition and led Bahrain from an oil-based economy to a diversified one. Under the Emir, Bahrain advanced in the Arab world, becoming the regional headquarters for many U.S. corporations doing business in the Middle East and a major financial hub in the Gulf.

Sheikh Issa's son, Sheikh Hamad Bin Issa Al-Khalifa, assumed his father's position as Emir of Bahrain, and is expected to follow in his father's footsteps in promoting economic development at home and political cooperation abroad. Soon after the Emir's death, His Highness, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, the Prime Minister of Bahrain, gave a eulogy in memory of the late Emir.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I request that his remarks be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for our colleagues' review. I know that we all share in the sorrow of the citizens of Bahrain. Yet, we look forward to even closer bilateral relations between the United States and the State of Bahrain under Emir Hamad in the months and years to come.

EULOGY OF HIS HIGHNESS SHAIKH KHALIFA BIN  
SALMAN AL-KHALIFA, PRIME MINISTER OF  
THE STATE OF BAHRAIN

It is a most said occasion to stand here today over the lost of the dearest and most cherished of men, the late Emir H.H. Sheikh Issa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, leader, father, and dear brother. May his soul rest in eternal peace and may God Almighty grant him mercy.

With the passing of H.H. Sheikh Issa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, Bahrain and the Arab and Islamic world have lost a unique leader, who pledged himself and devoted his entire life to building and developing his country in all fields. He was tireless in his endeavors to achieve peace and security in the region and in the world. He was also a kind and gentle leader, full of love and devotion for his people. He set himself as an example that is hard to follow. As a leader and father, he combined wisdom with a loving heart and high moral standards of decency. In dealing with his people and other nations, he relied on justice and honesty. His ultimate goal was cooperation and peace for all relations among nations.

H.H. Sheikh Issa's reign was an era of peace, a time of building and progress, a time of development and national unity. During his reign, Bahrain achieved regional and international recognition in all fields—an achievement that makes us all very proud. Bahrain made progress and development in health, education, and housing. Our nation reached a higher economic status, as well as an excellent reputation of credibility abroad. Bahrain played a prominent role in establishing and strengthening the Gulf Cooperation Council. Under his leadership, our nation had a very positive role in all Arab issues, calling for solidarity, urging the removal of all matters of discord, and defending Arab rights and issues. Internationally, Bahrain attained a distinguished status due to the respect, trust, and friendship he personally developed with leaders of the world. Those leaders appreciated his great contributions in promoting world peace, security,

and stability and in strengthening international cohesion and cooperation, as well as supporting humane values and issues.

No words can really give adequate credit to the last Emir H.H. Sheikh Issa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa for his love for his country and his kindness to his people. He was a sincere Emir—a wise leader, an idealist in his devotion with concern and care for all Arab, Islamic, and world issues. H.H. Sheikh Issa shall remain a giant among men in the history of this nation for his great achievements and his high morals and ethics. His memory shall forever remain alive in the minds and hearts of his country and his loving people.

In this time of great sorrow for H.H. Sheikh Issa we take solace his son and successor, H.H. Sheikh Hamad Bin Issa Al-Khalifa, with every confidence that he will be a fit and able successor to his father. We are confident that his reign shall witness further development, progress, and prosperity due to his wisdom, excellent leadership capabilities, and strong administrative abilities. It is our pride to exert the utmost dedication in supporting H.H. Sheikh Hamad to continue the path of development which was established by the beloved, great leader nationally, regionally, and internationally.

We would also like to extend our best wishes to our dear son H.H. Sheikh Salman Bin Hamad Bin Issa Al-Khalifa on his appointment as Crown Prince—an appointment that has received the full consideration and support of all.

The proper transfer of leadership in this nation has a positive impact on all, since it reflects the solidity of the rule of law and all its institutions that the late Emir has established. In this sad time, we would like to express our sincere pride for the show of support displayed by the Bahraini people, symbolizing the spirit of a single family that the late leader was keen to develop. This spirit reflects the cohesion between the people of Bahrain and their leadership, as the late leader had wished.

We wish to extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the leaders, governments, and peoples of all brotherly and friendly states for their true sentiments and their generous participation with Bahrain on the sad demise of the late great leader, the father, and beloved brother H.H. Sheikh Issa.

May God Almighty grant our beloved leader mercy and rest in heaven. Peace and God's mercy by upon you all.

MATT MOSELEY IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF EXTRAORDINARY COURAGE

**HON. MAC COLLINS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 21, 1999*

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a resident of my Congressional district from Locust Grove, Georgia, who recently demonstrated extraordinary courage and bravery in the face of extreme danger.

Atlanta Professional Firefighter (member of Local 134) Matt Moseley began his day on April 12 like many others, at 7 am. He was called to a chemical spill in the morning, ate lunch at Fire Station 4 on Ellis Street, and then planned to spend the afternoon training. Little did he know what lay ahead.

A fire raging at the 120 year old Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill in southeast Atlanta had trapped construction worker Ivers Sims on a crane for over an hour some 220 feet above